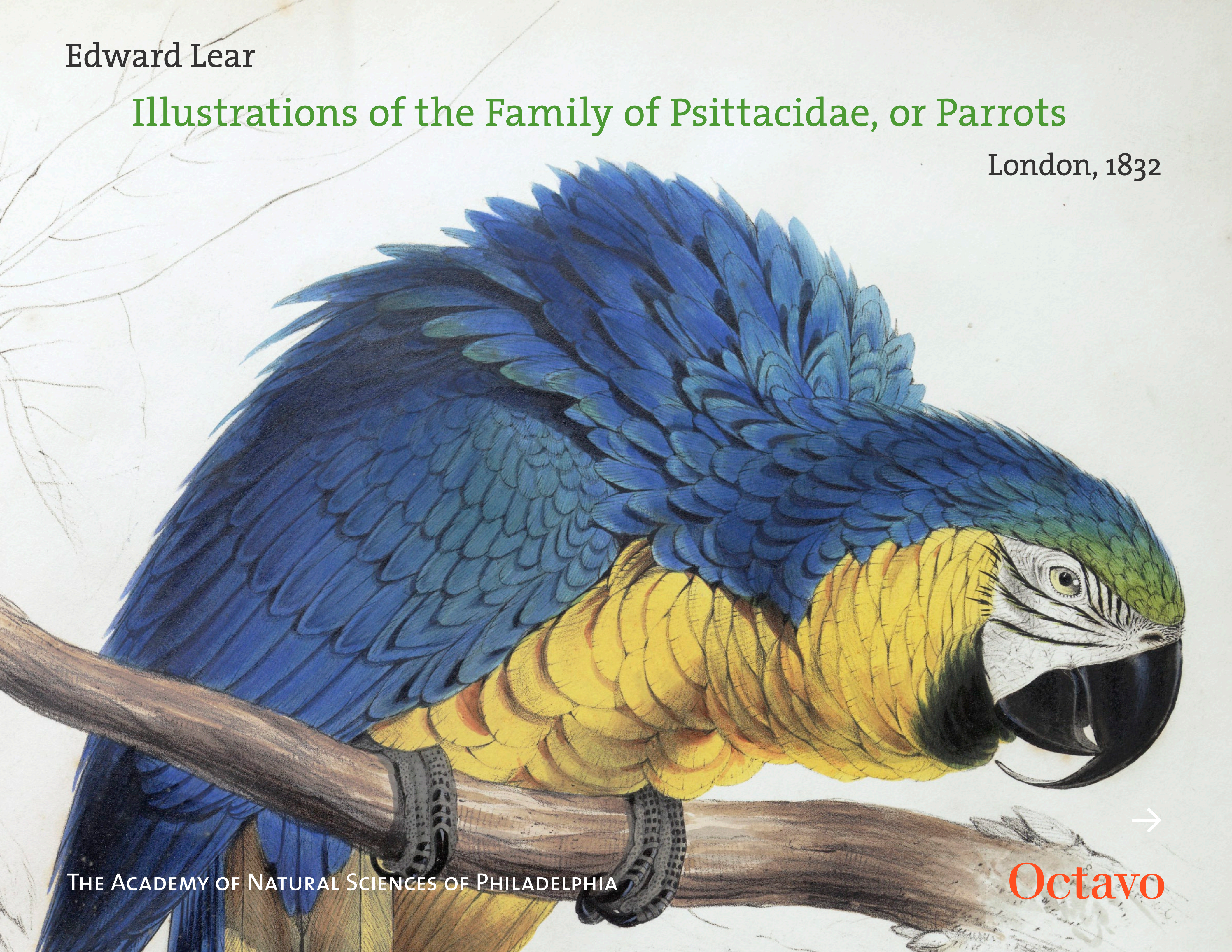
Edward Lear

Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidae, or Parrots

London, 1832



The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia

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The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia

Octavo

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Greater Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (plate 3).

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832

Edward Lear's Parrots

Robert McCracken Peck

On the first of November, 1830, a young artist delivered to the Linnean Society of London and a small cadre of bibliophiles the first few plates for an unusual book on parrots. Edward Lear (1812–88), who would later gain a devoted following as an author of nonsense verse, was only nineteen years old at the time and just establishing himself as a painter of natural history. He gave his work the self-descriptive title *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidae, or Parrots*. It was the first British publication ever devoted to a single family of birds. Issued in twelve parts between 1830 and 1832, the book ultimately contained forty-two hand-colored lithographic plates of macaws, cockatoos, parakeets, lovebirds, and parrots, the majority of which Lear drew from living specimens in public and private collections throughout England.

Although Lear offered no text with his plates (save for a list of subscribers, a dedication page, and a taxonomically arranged list of the plates), his illustrations were so outstanding and so superior to anything that had preceded them in Great Britain, that the *Psittacidae* earned Lear the immediate respect and admiration of the country's scientific community. England's leading ornithologist, Prideaux John Selby, pronounced Lear's parrot plates "beautifully coloured & I think infinitely superior to Audubon's in softness and the drawing as good."[1] The naturalist William Swainson, who a decade earlier had created the first large-scale

ornithological book to be illustrated with lithographs in Britain, compared two of Lear's depictions favorably to "any figure ever painted by [Jacques] Barraband or [John James] Audubon for grace of design, perspective, or anatomical accuracy."[2] It was high praise from someone not known for flattery, for the two artists he cited for comparison were then deemed the finest painters ever to have captured the images of birds.

Edward Lear, pencil portrait by Wilhelm Marstrand, 1840.

In recognition of the young artist's achievement and in anticipation of the book's important contribution to science, Lear was nominated to associate membership of the Linnean Society of London within a day of issuing the first plates.[3] It was a remarkable achievement for a nineteen year old who had few credentials in either art or science.

EARLY LIFE

Edward Lear was born on May 12, 1812, as the twentieth of twenty-one children born to Ann (Clark Skerrett) and Jeremiah Lear. Because of the size of his family and a reversal in his father's fortunes soon after Edward's birth, Lear was raised by his eldest sister, Ann, with whom he lived from the age of four until he moved to Italy in 1837.[4] As part of the rudimentary education she gave him, his sister taught him to draw and paint; several small albums of Lear's childhood paintings attest to his artistic talent and his early interest in natural history. Filled with exotic birds set in imaginary tropical and semiarid locales, they hint of the life he would ultimately create for himself as a scientific illustrator and landscape artist.[5]

As a boy, Lear earned a meager income drawing what he called "uncommon queer shop-sketches—selling them for prices varying from ninepence to four shillings: colouring prints, screens, fans; awhile making morbid disease drawings, for hospitals and certain doctors of physic" in London.[6] With the encouragement of his sister and, most likely, some of his medical clients, he eventually shifted his artistic focus from the lifeless subjects of the factory, hospital, and morgue to the far more appealing and demonstrably vital occupants of the recently established Zoological Society of London.[7] Lear found the zoo's intellectual and visual stimulation very much to his liking. Its members were friendly and encouraging of his artistic aspirations. Happily for Lear, this vibrant and growing society also provided him with opportunities for professional employment as a freelance artist.

In late 1829 or 1830, he created a number of small black-and-white illustrations for Edward Turner Bennett, Secretary of the Zoological Society. At least two of these were published, without attribution, in *The Gardens and Menagerie of the Zoological Society Delineated* (1830–31), which Bennett edited.[8] At about this time Lear also began receiving commissions to illustrate scholarly scientific publications such as *Illustrations of Ornithology* (1826–35 and 1836–43) by William Jardine and Prideaux John Selby[9] and *The Zoology of Captain Beechey's Voyage* (1839).[10] Encouraged by his success in these endeavors, Lear concluded that, rather than working piecemeal for others, he could establish a broader reputation as an artist and augment his income by publishing a book of his own. He chose as his subject a family of birds whose personalities appealed to his own sense of whimsy and whose increasing

availability, colorful appearance, and exotic reputations had ensured their popularity as caged birds among the wealthy collectors whose patronage Lear was most eager to attract.

THE *PSITTACIDAE*

In June 1830, Lear formally applied to the zoo's council for permission "to make drawings of the Parrots belonging to the Society."[11] The Zoological Society of London then had its administrative headquarters and museum at 33 Bruton Street, near Piccadilly, with more extensive facilities at its recently acquired "Gardens" in Regents Park.[12] As living specimens were kept at both sites, Lear spent a good deal of time at both places. He also painted at the Surrey Zoological Gardens (founded by Edward Cross in 1831), at Leadbeater's taxidermy and live animal emporium in Golden Square,[13] at the art and taxidermy studio of John Gould on Bruton Street, and in private aviaries and ornithological collections throughout England.

Through the library at the Zoological Society or several of his wealthy patrons, Lear would have had access to most, if not all, of the existing literature on parrots. The most important single work on the subject was undoubtedly Francois Levaillant's two-volume folio *Histoire naturelle des perroquets* (1804–05). In addition to its extensive text, it featured 145 magnificent hand-colored, engraved illustrations by Jacques Barraband (1767–1809). A more current publication was the smaller *Monographia Psittacorum* by Johann Wagler, published in Germany in 1832 just as Lear was completing his work. Its six illustrations by an unknown artist (possibly Wagler himself) are charming, but stiff and primitive when compared with the work of Barraband and Lear.[14]

Carolina Parrakeet by Jacques Barraband, from *Histoire naturelle des perroquets.*

For his own book, Lear made dozens of pencil and watercolor studies of as many members of the parrot family as he could find. He generally drew his subjects life-size, often filling the margins of his studies with notes to himself about the color or texture of the feathers, bills, eyes, and feet. With the help of sympathetic keepers, he tried, whenever possible, to measure the individual

feathers of the birds' wings and tails to ensure correct proportion in his depictions. With a hint of things to come in future years, he sometimes added pencil or ink caricatures of the men, women, and children who came to ogle the curious and entertaining occupants of the zoo, including Edward Lear himself.

Although he would eventually give up natural history painting to devote his talents entirely to the depiction of landscapes, he made little effort to create landscape backgrounds for the birds in his parrot illustrations. With the exception of his Collared Parrakeet (plate 40), in which he inserted an imaginary landscape with an exotic, oriental tent, Lear made only minimal reference to habitat in his parrot plates: a branch, some leaves, an occasional fruit or nut, just enough to give his birds something to grip and himself something with which to structure his composition.

The parrots he was painting were, of course, living in cages and eating whatever seeds or fruits their owners chose to give them—sometimes even their countries of origin were unknown—so trying to determine the appropriate plants with which to pair them was a considerable challenge. Often Lear was happy to show some vegetation from the right continent, let alone the exact habitat of his subjects. In a letter written at the time he was working on his parrot project, he asked a friend for "more sketches of S. American *trees*— ... for I often want them to put birds on...."[15]

While supportive details may have been drawn from secondary sources or from his own imagination, Lear's primary subjects were, whenever possible, studied from life. After many hours of close observation, when he was satisfied that he had captured both the physical appearance and characteristic postures of the living birds he wished to include, he carried his drawings to the printing studio of Charles Hullmandel in Great Marlborough Street. There Lear redrew them (in reverse) on lithographic stones in order to create the plates for his book. With Hullmandel's assistance, he printed his plates in black and white, then employed professional colorists to replicate the pigments from a set of colored "pattern plates" he prepared for them to copy. The best of the resulting prints conveyed the subtle colors and animated personalities of parrots in ways rarely attempted, and never before achieved.

Lear reports having limited the number of prints he made of each illustration to 175 in order to keep his costs down ("I have pretty great difficulty in paying my monthly charges") and "in order to get more subscribers" by establishing their scarcity from the very start.[16] After the requisite number of prints of each image had been pulled, Lear erased the expensive lithographic stones and reused them for succeeding plates.[17] It is clear from a letter he wrote to the English bookseller Charles Empson in October 1831 that all of the finished lithographs eventually came to rest in the rented living quarters he shared with his sister at 38 Upper North Place, Grays Inn Road. Even at home, Edward Lear was immersed in his work: "Of the six chairs I possess—," he wrote,

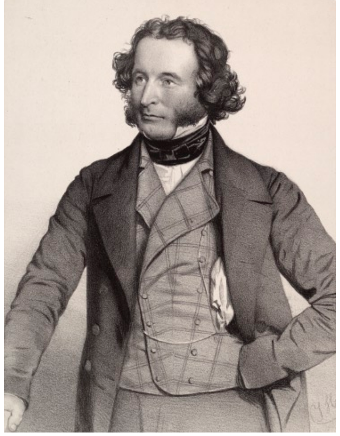
> 5 are at present occupied with lithographic prints:—the whole of my exalted & delightful upper tenement in fact overflows with them, and for the last 12 months I have so moved—thought—looked at,—& existed among Parrots——that should any transmigration take place at my decease I am sure my soul would be very uncomfortable in anything but one of the Psittacidae.[18]

When not engaged in drawing, painting, working on his lithographic stones, overseeing his colorists, or in other ways fulfilling his obligations to subscribers, Lear was raising the funds necessary to keep the expensive project going. He soon found that this

was at least as difficult as making the plates for the book. He ultimately succeeded in securing enough patronage to make the project possible thanks to his perseverance, the popular appeal of his topic, his talent as an artist, and the irresistible charm of his personality. "I have just nine and twenty times resolved to give up Parrots & all—," wrote Lear in 1831, "& should certainly have done so—had not my good genius with vast reluctance just 9 and 20 times set me to going again.—Opportet vivere [It is necessary to live]...."[19]

Lord Edward Stanley, the president of the Zoological Society at the time Lear applied for permission to paint there, become one of Lear's earliest and most important patrons, lending his prestige and influence to the artist's efforts by allowing his name to be attached to the roster of subscribers.[20] The list included academics, amateur naturalists, aviculturists, and book collectors. Some provided in-kind services in lieu of cash; others, financial backing. A few made their own live or mounted parrots available to Lear for inclusion in his book.[21] In this context, Lear may have made his first trip to Lord Stanley's estate, Knowsley Hall, near Liverpool, where he would later create some of the limericks and nonsense verse for which he is still widely known. Knowsley was the ancestral home of Lord Stanley, who was then beginning to assemble one of the largest private collections of exotic birds and mammals in Britain.[22]

Lear included at least two of Lord Stanley's birds, the Stanley Parrakeet (plate 24) and the Red-capped Parrakeet (plate 22), among the "species hitherto unfigured" in his work.[23] Recognition of the extremely high quality of Lear's work, and the pleasure of seeing his own birds in print, brought Lord Stanley's support for the parrot book and may have inspired him to commission Lear to paint many more of the rare bird and mammal species he had in captivity.[24] After Lord Stanley became the 13th Earl of Derby in 1834, he devoted even more of his attention—and considerable fortune—to natural history; Lord Derby would become Edward Lear's most important patron.[25]


William Jardine, 1849.

Despite critical acclaim for Lear and his book, the young artist had great difficulty recovering the costs of his publishing venture. "The tardy paying of many of my subscribers—renders it but too difficult to procure food—& pay for publishing, at once," he complained.[26] He had hoped his book would be more extensive, but financial constraints caused him to terminate the project after issuing only 42 plates.[27] As he wrote to William Jardine in explanation of the premature termination of the series:

> No more numbers will be published by me—the 12th ... being the last. Their publication was a speculation which—so far as it made me known & procured me employment in Zoological drawing——answered my expectations——but in matters of money occasioned me considerable loss. I originally intended to have figured all the Psittacidae—but I stopped in time [to avoid bankruptcy?]; neither will there be—(from me) any letterpress.[28]

It was therefore with considerable relief that, in March 1833, Lear agreed to sell his remaining copies of the *Psittacidae* to the principal "curator and preserver" of specimens at the London Zoo, John Gould.[29] Gould was just then beginning his own career of publishing important books on natural history, and he was happy to have Lear's impressive illustrations as part of his inventory. He

was also pleased to enlist Lear's services as a part-time employee, rather than to have him become a competitor in the small but growing field of scientific book production.

OTHER NATURAL HISTORY WORKS

Having recognized Lear's talent as a painter when the younger artist first arrived at the zoo, Gould had already employed him to give his wife, Elizabeth, painting lessons and to assist her with the background painting for his own book, *A Century of Birds Hitherto Unfigured from the Himalaya Mountains* (1830–33). He now engaged Lear to provide full plates for a projected series of ornithological books, including *A Monograph of the Ramphastidae or Family of Toucans* (1834) and *The Birds of Europe* (1832–37). These and other natural history projects, such as the lithography for the important monograph on turtles by Thomas Bell and James Sowerby, kept Lear extremely busy throughout the 1830s and resulted in a large body of published work. They consumed almost every minute of his time. "I am up to my neck in hurry and work from 5 a.m. till 7 p.m. without cessation," he wrote to a friend in 1833.[30]

John Gould, 1849.

One of the projects undertaken by Lear during this period allowed him to return to the subject that had first established his reputation and helped to launch his career—parrots. Since 1833, Prideaux John Selby and William Jardine had been publishing a series of popular books on natural history entitled *The Naturalist's Library*. For three of the forty duodecimo volumes that were

Eagle Owl by Lear, from *The Birds of Europe*.

eventually produced, the authors invited Lear to provide two illustrations of lions (1834), thirty-two plates of pigeons (1835), and another thirty-two plates of parrots (1836). Lear's correspondence with Jardine about this last commission reveals much about his relationship with John Gould and about his own working methods as an artist. In response to Jardine's request to copy and republish his forty-two parrot images from the *Psittacidae,* Lear wrote:

> Concerning the request you make that I would allow these being copied—I have no power either to refuse or comply—since I have sold all right in the volume to Mr. Gould. He purchased of me—the copies left on my hands—and he alone is to be applied to on the point you wish answered.
>
> Supposing Mr. Gould should object to my Psittacidae being copied,—I believe I may add that from possessing a vast number of sketches from living Parrots I should be able to furnish you with drawings at a rather less charge than that I make for quadrupeds at present.[31] It was my habit, at the time I was publishing—to sketch almost every parrot that came in my way—& I thus obtained many figures of said species. Were there any considerable number required, I would make finished drawings for £1. 0. 0. each, both on account of the references I have by me, & because Parrots are my favourites, & I can do them with greater facility than any other class of animals ....

Later in the same letter Lear provided an uncharacteristic piece of marketing advice: "I might also suggest that by recopying my Parrots—you diminish the chance of a hundred (—most of them zoological people)—of my subscribers purchasing your volume, as they would prefer original figures to duplicates."[32]

Jardine heeded Lear's warning and commissioned him to create original plates for his *Naturalist's Library* volume on parrots.[33] Eleven of the new plates represented species that had also appeared in Lear's collection, but of these, only four bear a resemblance to his original plates. Working from his studies of several years before, Lear made thirty-two new watercolors (on a much smaller scale than those for his own work). These were engraved by William Lizars, the Scottish engraver and publisher who was already one of Lear's greatest admirers. "Lear's Drawing are nature," he wrote Jardine, "and all others Pottery-ware." Lizars spoke as one who had seen and engraved hundreds, perhaps thousands, of illustrations of birds by some of Great Britain's most illustrious ornithologists as well as the first two plates for John James Audubon's *The Birds of America.*[34]

Papuan Lory by Lear, from *The Naturalist's Library,* volume vi.

Despite Lizars' high praise of them, Lear's original watercolors for *The Naturalist's Library* are far less impressive than the illustrations he created for his own book. Although perfectly adequate as illustrations, they seem perfunctory by comparison, painted much more quickly and with none of the passion evident in the first parrot portraits.

ARTISTIC DISTINCTION

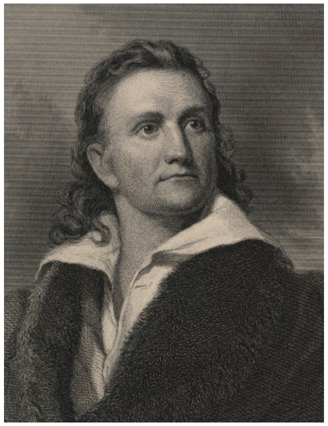
What is it about the plates from Lear's work on parrots that makes them so remarkable? What sets them apart from some of the artist's later work and from the work of his contemporaries and other artists who preceded him? First, it should be acknowledged that not every plate in Lear's book is of equally high calibre. The gradient of quality has to do, at least in part, with Lear's artistic maturation. We know from the records of the Linnean Society of London that some of the best plates in his book were among the last Lear issued. This improvement in quality is difficult to detect because the plates were ultimately arranged and bound taxonomically, not in the order in which they were painted, published, or distributed to the book's subscribers in fascicles.[35]

The second and even more important factor affecting the quality of Lear's illustrations was the degree to which the artist had access to living specimens. All of Lear's ornithological lithographs reflect a thorough grasp of avian anatomy and feather structure. What sets his best pictures above the rest is the sense of individual personality that he was able to evoke in the subjects he drew from life.[36]

The stiffest plates in his work were those drawn from stuffed specimens, as Lear's surviving notes and correspondence confirm. On his preliminary study for plate 23, the Stanley Parrakeet (issued in November 1830), for example, Lear noted that the bird was painted "from a stuffed male lent me by Mr. Gould."[37] Similarly, he acknowledged, in response to critical comments from his representative in Northumberland, that the Long-billed Parrakeet Maccaw in plate 11 (issued in October 1831), "was taken from—*a stuffed specimen*, which—however I disguise it, hook or by crook—you are sure to find erroneous in some degree:—and it certainly is so—for I am never pleased with a drawing unless I make it from life."[38]

By contrast, Lear's Greater Sulphur-crested Cockatoo (plate 3), Red and Yellow Maccaw (plate 7), and Blue and Yellow Maccaw (plate 8) are so clearly drawn from living birds that we do not need to see his preliminary studies or read his unpublished notes to identify their source. That all three of these plates were created relatively late in the production of the book (late 1831 and early 1832) seems to confirm that by then Lear had developed a thorough understanding of his avian subjects and mastered the art of lithography as a printing technique. More than any other pictures in his book, these three seem to show Lear's pleasure in painting birds and the deep affection he had developed for his subjects.

Of Lear's contemporaries, only the American artist John James Audubon claimed to have painted directly from life. A more accurate description of his method might be that he observed living birds in the wild, then drew them from memory and from freshly killed specimens. His final models were, in Audubon's words, "put up before me by means of wires, &c. in the precise attitude represented."[39] Audubon found most of his subjects in wild places that did not lend themselves to painting. For this reason, most of his illustrations were made from models in his studio.


John James Audubon, 1833.

Audubon used wire armatures in freshly killed birds to achieve the animated poses in his illustrations, and he made a point of distinguishing between his technique and the use of cotton-stuffed museum or "cabinet"

"Carolina Parrot" by John James Audubon, from *The Birds of America*.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832

skins, which had previously been the traditional source material for scientific illustrators. "I have *never* drawn from a stuffed specimen," declared Audubon:

> My reason for this has been, that I discovered when in museums, where large collections of that kind are to be met with, that the persons *generally* employed for the purpose of mounting them possessed no further talents than that of filling the skins until *plumply formed*, and adorning them with eyes and legs generally of their own fancy.... In forming works entirely with a view to distinguish the true from the false, nature *must* be seen first alive, and well studied, before attempts are made at representing it.[40]

At times, Lear had no choice but to work from cabinet specimens, for parrots were still relatively rare birds in England, and he did not have the wherewithal to travel to Australia, Africa, or South America to see members of the parrot family in the wild. When he did work from living specimens, his subjects were caged birds accustomed to having people admire them from close proximity. While Audubon often had to paint around the clock to capture the recent vitality of his deteriorating specimens, Lear knew he could always return to his living subjects to complete their unfinished portraits at his convenience. "A huge Maccaw is staring me now in the face as much as to say—'finish me'—," he wrote in 1831, "but I guess the poor animal must remain minus a body & one wing for some time to come."[41]

With such advantages, Lear's paintings often have a relaxed, natural appearance. The best of his parrots crane their necks, ruffle their feathers, and climb deliberately on their branches, but they never exceed the limits of believable action. By contrast, Audubon's birds seem frozen in time, their poses quite literally fixed in space before the artist ever began to work.

Lear's decision to reproduce his parrot portraits in the new medium of lithography helped contribute to the lifelike feeling captured in many of his plates. Both Audubon's and Barraband's illustrations of the same family of birds used the traditional eighteenth-century techniques of copper engraving. Lear, like William Swainson before him, helped to usher in the new era of lithography. Drawing with a waxy pencil or crayon directly on blocks of fine-grained German limestone, Lear gave an immediacy to his work using continuous tones. This effect was all but impossible to achieve with the cumbersome, hard-edged engraving techniques that conveyed volume and surface texture by lines and cross-hatching.

It is a testament to Lear's ability as a lithographer that he could capture the paintings of another artist on stone with almost as much sensitivity and fidelity as that with which he conveyed his own work from an original watercolor to a published print. Lear disliked the "filthy" process of lithography,[42] but when his friend and patron Thomas Bell, a professor of Zoology at King's College and Secretary of the Royal Society, asked him to be the lithographer for his landmark book on turtles, *A Monograph of the Testudinata*, Lear agreed. Working from James de Carle Sowerby's original watercolors, Lear created some of the most beautiful lithographs of turtles ever made. Today, Bell's book stands along with Lear's *Psittacidae* as one of the finest natural history publications of the nineteenth century.

Testudo actinodes by Lear, from Thomas Bell's *A Monograph of the Testudinata.*

From Lear's earliest serious natural history paintings (made before the work on parrots) to his last (a series of duck and dove studies dated May and June 1837), one can see a dramatic progression from artistically adequate to extraordinary, and then a gradual decline in the quality of his work. During the peak years of his natural history painting—1831 to 1836—Lear's watercolors show complete mastery of both his subjects and his medium. His ability as an artist appears to have coalesced just as he issued the final plates for his work on parrots and received his first commissions from Lord Stanley.

Lear spent a good portion of every year between 1831 and 1836 working at Knowsley Hall, but as the decade wore on, he began to tire of the repetitive nature of the paintings he was being commissioned to produce. Troubled by poor eyesight from an early age, Lear found the close work required for scientific illustration particularly taxing. "My eyes are so sadly worse," he wrote John Gould in 1836, "that no bird under an Ostrich shall I soon be able to see to do."[43]

After the critical success of the *Psittacidae* and the praise Lear received for his subsequent natural history painting and lithography, he thought it was time to move on to something else. While learning and refining his printing techniques under the direction of Charles Hullmandel in London, Lear befriended several artists whose extended painting trips to Europe and the Middle East whetted his own appetite for travel and stimulated an ambition to become a landscape artist.[44]

LATER ARTISTIC CAREER

Lord Derby might have preferred to have Lear remain in England to continue painting wildlife at the Zoological Society and Knowsley Hall, but he recognized Lear's need for broader horizons. Along with his nephew, Robert Hornby, and "30 friends of very different families," the Earl offered to support a study trip to Italy for Lear in 1837. "I am going to put in practice a long nursed dream of studying for 2 years at Rome," Lear wrote a friend to explain his plan. "Tho great as may be the benefit I may derive as to my profession, my health both needs & may expect a greater."[45] Although professing homesickness for his family and friends in England, Lear was more than happy to escape the "profoundly horrible" climate of his homeland and the gruelling demands of commissioned illustration.[46] In the liberating atmosphere of Italy, both his health and his skills at rendering landscapes improved.

Lear remained a lifelong friend of the Earl's family and returned to Knowsley Hall as a guest over the next fifty years, but he would never again paint natural history subjects. Of the hundred or more bird and mammal portraits he had made at Knowsley Hall, only seventeen were published by the Earl in *Gleanings from the Menagerie and Aviary at Knowsley Hall* (volume 1) in 1846, some nine years after Lear's departure.

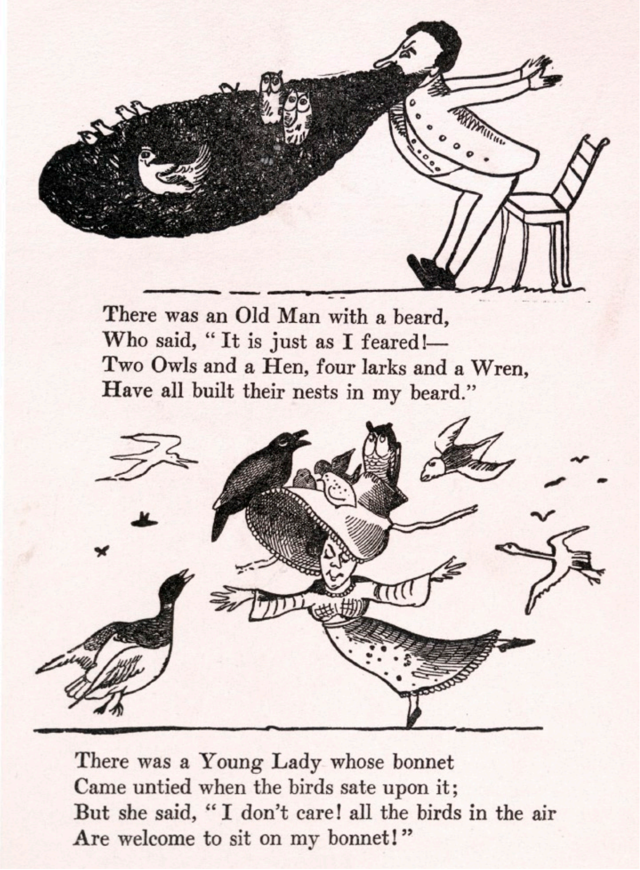
Originally, Lord Derby wanted to publish Lear's illustrations along with those of Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins, a wildlife artist who the Earl had hired to paint some of the larger animals living at Knowsley following Lear's departure for Italy. John Edward Gray, who served as an advisor to Lord Derby in matters of natural history, and who had been asked to write an accompanying text for the book, suggested a different plan. Pointing out that Lear's paintings were so good, they "might make Hawkins' look

Red Macauco by Lear, from *Gleanings from the Menagerie and Aviary at Knowsley Hall.*

worse than they really are if mixed together," Gray urged Lord Derby to publish instead "two separate works of equal rank and appearance, one coming out a year after the other," each featuring the illustrations of a single artist.[47]

The publication, printed by Lear's associates at the lithographic firm of Hullmandel & Walton, was limited to just 100 copies "for private distribution." Lear was no longer interested in working on scientific publications and was then out of the country, so the plates for *Gleanings* were transferred from his original watercolors to stone by J.W. Moore. The black and white prints were hand-colored with extraordinary skill by a professional colorist named Gabriel Bayfield, also in Hullmandel's employ.[48] John Edward Gray noted in his preface to the book, with its seventeen illustrations and ten pages of descriptive text, that the "chief value" of Lear's illustrations "consists in their being accurate representations of living specimens."[49]

While both volumes of *Gleanings* are exceptionally rare, the first volume, featuring Lear's work, now ranks along with the *Psittacidae* as one of the most admired and sought-after color plate books of the nineteenth century. It was published in 1846, the same year as Lear's two-volume travel book, *Illustrated Excursions in Italy,* and his *A Book of Nonsense.*



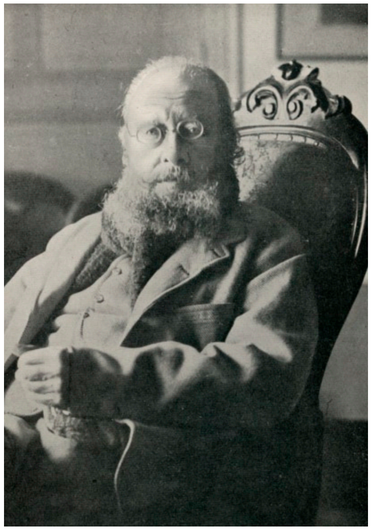
Two avian examples of Lear's nonsense verse and drawings.

LEAR'S REPUTATION

Although they are the things for which he is best remembered today, Lear's limericks were not the creations with which he wished to be identified. It was a source of frustration to Lear that the whimsical nonsense verses, originally written and illustrated to entertain Lord Derby's children and grandchildren at Knowsley Hall, gained far more notoriety than the serious work to which he devoted most of his career. Lear at first refused to claim authorship of *A Book of Nonsense,* seeking to avoid having such frivolous writings undercut his reputation as a naturalist, travel writer, and professional artist. In the first and second editions of the book, he assumed the pseudonym Derry Down Derry ("who loved to see little folks merry"). It was only after hearing others, including Lord Derby, credited with his work that Lear admitted authorship in the third edition, published in 1861.

Lear would have preferred to have been more widely recognized for his achievements as a painter, but he came to accept and even relish the celebrity he enjoyed as a humorist. Late in his life he was pleased to learn that the influential artist and critic John Ruskin placed him first in his list of one hundred authors and

declared Lear's *Book of Nonsense* "the most beneficent and innocent of all books yet produced."[50]



The last photograph of Lear, 1887.

At the time of his death in San Remo, Italy, in 1888, Lear had created an enormous body of work. In his long and productive lifetime he created more than 7,000 watercolors of his travels in Europe, the Greek isles, the Middle East, and India, some 2,000 studio watercolors, more than 300 oil paintings, almost 400 natural history paintings, five illustrated travel books, two books of natural history illustration, and more than 100 other published lithographs documenting birds, mammals, and reptiles from various parts of the world.[51]

Academic tradition placed offhand ink sketches at the bottom of the hierarchy of culture, grand oil paintings at the top. Lear struggled to reach the heights of artistic respectability, but in this success eluded him; he recorded his fate in a "Growling Eclogue" in 1867:

> To make large drawings nobody will buy—
> To paint oil pictures which will never dry—[52]

This Octavo Edition of Lear's *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidae, or Parrots* now brings some of this artist's most beautiful and important illustrations to a wider audience than hitherto possible.

NOTES

1. Letter from Prideaux John Selby to Sir William Jardine, 10 January 1831, Cambridge University Library. The difference in softness between the published works of the two artists may, in part, be attributed to the different printing techniques they employed. While Audubon's birds were published as aquatint engravings (by Robert Havell, Jr.), Lear's were lithographs, drawn directly on stone by the artist himself. Both were hand-colored before publication.

2. Letter from Sir William Swainson to Edward Lear, 26 November 1831, Houghton Library, Harvard University; published in Vivien Noakes, *Edward Lear: The Life of a Wanderer* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1969), 34. Swainson (1789–1855) was responsible for the pioneering lithographic work *Zoological Illustrations* (London: Baldwin, Craddock, and Joy, 1820–23).

3. Lear was nominated on 2 November 1830, and elected an Associate Member on 18 January 1831. His sponsors at the society were three of its most respected and influential members: N.A. Vigors, a distinguished ornithologist who had lent some of his own parrots to Lear; Thomas Bell, a professor of Zoology at Kings College London for whom Lear would later make paintings of turtles and other animals (see note 6, below); and Dr. Edward Bennett, one of the founders of the Zoological Society and author of the guidebook to the zoo that Lear was then illustrating. Two of the three were subscribers to the *Psittacidae.*

4. Another sister, Sarah, also may have played a role in Lear's education. Next to Ann, Sarah was the sibling with whom Lear had the closest relationship. He visited her regularly in Arundel, Sussex, after her marriage to Charles Street in 1823. For a detailed discussion of Lear's early life, see Noakes, *Edward Lear: The Life of a Wanderer.*

5. See Lear's notebook of 1829 at the National Library of Scotland, or his childhood album (no date) at the Houghton Library, Harvard University (MS Typ 55.4). A third childhood album with similar illustrations is in a private collection in England.

6. "By Way of Preface," *Nonsense Songs and Stories,* 6th Edition (London: F. Warne & Co., 1888), 6, quoted in *Letters of Edward Lear,* ed. Lady Strachey (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1907), xxvii. One of the doctors for whom Lear may have made illustrations was Thomas Bell (1792–1880), a distinguished dental surgeon who was also one of England's leading naturalists. Lear would later create the lithographic plates for Bell's *A Monograph of the Testudinata* (1832–36) and some of the illustrations for his *A History of British Quadrupeds* (1837). Another prominent surgeon with whom he had contact was Edward Turner Bennett (1797–1836). Lear would later provide illustrations for his guidebook to the zoo, *The Gardens and Menagerie of the Zoological Society Delineated* (1830–31), and color plates for the society's *Transactions* (1833–36 and 1836–41).

7. The society was founded on 29 April 1826. The Gardens in Regent's Park opened on 27 April 1828. Lear credited his introduction to the zoo to Mrs. Godfrey Wentworth (the daughter of Turner's patron Walter Ramsden Fawkes). See Strachey, *Letters of Edward Lear,* xvii–xviii. As a token of his appreciation of her steadfast support, Lear listed Mrs. Wentworth of 49 Wilton Crescent, Belgrave Square, [London,] second (after Queen Alexandra) among the subscribers to the *Psittacidae.*

8. Although the book was supposed to have been illustrated by William Harvey (1796–1866), the illustration of Lemurs (volume I, pp. 145 and 299) and of the Blue and Yellow Maccaw (volume II, p. 125) bear Lear's distinctive "EL" monogram.

9. Lear mentions having begun his association with Prideaux John Selby (1788–1867) at the age of sixteen (1828 or early 1829), see Letter to C. Fortescue, 21 January 1862, in Strachey, *Letters of Edward Lear,* 219–23. See also Noakes, *Edward Lear: The Life of a Wanderer,* 30. Lear's illustrations for Jardine (1800–74) and Selby appear in volume 3, part 10, plates 147, 149, 151; and volume 4, second series, plates 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 12, 13, 16, 17, 24, 29, 32, 33, 34, 37, 38, 40. He also produced illustrations for their popular *Naturalist's Library* (various dates). Christine Jackson, pers. corr., 30/8/94. See also Jackson, *Prideaux John Selby: A Gentleman Naturalist* (Stocksfield, Northumberland: The Spredden Press, 1992) and Christine E. Jackson and Peter Davis, *Sir William Jardine: A Life in Natural History* (London: Leicester University Press, 2001).

10. Although the 1839 publication date of *The Zoology of Captain Beechey's Voyage* might lead one to believe that Lear made the illustrations late in his natural history career, both a text reference to the book's delayed publication and the unusually stiff and primitive style of Lear's illustrations suggest that he probably painted the pictures shortly after Beechey's return from the Pacific in 1828. Even though Lear's pictures for it were not published for almost a decade, the commission was an extremely important one for Lear, for it did much to establish his reputation as a scientific illustrator by bringing him to the attention of the other personalities associated with this work. These included a who's who of naturalists working in London at the time, including J. Richardson, N.A. Vigors, John E. Gray, the Rev. W. Buckland, and G.B. Sowerby, all of whom would work closely with Lear in the years ahead.

11. The minutes of the Council of the Zoological Society for 16 June 1830 state that "Permission was granted to Mr. Lear to make drawings of the Parrots belonging to the Society." I am indebted to the Society's librarian, Ann Sylph, for this information.

12. The Gardens, though officially opened to the public in 1828, were generally only accessible to members of the Society and their guests. It is for this reason that Lear needed formal permission from the Society to make paintings of its living and preserved specimens. For a popular history of the Zoological Society, see Wilfrid Blunt, *The Ark in the Park: The Zoo in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Hamish Hamilton/Tryon Gallery, 1976).

13. This was a thriving commercial establishment operated by Benjamin Leadbeater (fl. 1760–1837) and his son John Leadbeater (ca. 1800–52).

14. Interestingly, Wagler (1800–32) complained that "Levaillant has taken over plates of parrots from Buffon and Edwards without acknowledgement, and with some deliberate changes to disguise the fact." Johann Wagler, "Monographia Psittacorum," in *Denkschriften der Koniglichen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu München* (Munich, 1832), 467, quoted in Erwin Stresemann, *Ornithology from Aristotle to the Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 97.

15. Letter Edward Lear to Charles Empson, 1 October 1831, in Vivien Noakes, ed., *Edward Lear: Selected Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 15. The original letter is owned by the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.

16. Ibid., 14.

17. The blank backs of a number of uncolored prints were used by Lear for the life studies of birds whose illustrations were also included in the book, thus giving some indication of sequencing and a hint of how closely Lear was watching his budget. No scrap of paper went unused. Whether these were "pulls" that Lear had rejected because of uneven or faulty inking, or simply extra prints for which he could find no other use, they indicate that there may have been some "overage" beyond his stated 175-print limit.

18. Letter Edward Lear to Charles Empson, 1 October 1831, in Noakes, *Edward Lear: Selected Letters,* 16.

19. Ibid.

20. Lord Stanley's name appears eighteenth on Lear's list of 110 subscribers. In his diary (preserved at Knowsley Hall), he records Lear's personal delivery of the fourth installment of the *Psittacidae* to his house on Grosvenor Square in London on 11 February 1831. He does not indicate whether or not he and Lear had met before, but it is quite likely that their paths had crossed at the Zoological Society. For a more detailed account of his patronage of Lear, see Robert McCracken Peck, "Edward Lear, Natural History Artist," in *A Passion for Natural History: The Life and Legacy of the 13th Earl of Derby*, ed. Clemency Fisher (Liverpool: NMGM Enterprises, 2002), 164–73.

21. Several of the people listed as subscribers may have provided services rather than cash for their copies of the book. Charles Hullmandel, for example, was Lear's lithographer, and John Gould (1804–81), as keeper of collections at the Zoological Society, provided models for many of the birds depicted. As sources for the birds he painted, Lear acknowledged Lord Stanley, the Zoological Society, Mr. Gould, Mr. Vigors, Mr. Leadbeater, Sir Henry Halford, and the Countess of Mountcharles.

22. There is no hard evidence to pinpoint when Lear first visited Knowsley Hall, but circumstantial evidence suggests that it could have been as early as 1830. A folio of tree studies, including a pencil study of oak branches at Knowsley that is reportedly dated 1830, appeared on the art market in 1994 (Sotheby's, London, 14/4/94, lot 243). If the date of this work is correct, an 1830 visit is certain, but as Lear's 6's and 0's are easily confused, it is quite possible that the attributed date of the study is incorrect. Unfortunately Lear's diaries from this period have been destroyed, so unless some other evidence comes to light, we may never know when and under what circumstances he first set foot on the grounds at Knowsley Hall.

23. Of the two Stanley Parakeets in Lear's work, the artist has noted on his watercolor studies that one (here plate 24) was "from a living female or young male—lent me by Lord Stanley" while the other (here plate 23) was "from a stuffed male lent me by Mr. Gould." See Lear Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Album PF MS Typ 55.9(6). Of the two Red-capped Parakeets (plates 21 and 22), the second, a female, is credited in the print itself as being "In the Possession of the Right Hon. Lord Stanley."

24. Lord Stanley would eventually (after he had become the Earl of Derby) publish a selection of Lear's watercolors in John Edward Gray's *Gleanings from the Menagerie and Aviary at Knowsley Hall* (Liverpool: privately printed, 1846). The originals were painted during the years 1835 and 1836 from living and preserved specimens at Knowsley.

25. The live collections at Knowsley Hall, considered unrivalled for the number, rarity, and beauty of the species they contained at the time of the 13th Earl's death in 1851, eventually included several thousand specimens representing 318 different species of birds alone. The outdoor establishment covered over 100 acres and required a staff of thirty to maintain. They were complemented by a comprehensive natural history library and a museum collection of preserved birds and mammals that numbered almost 20,000 specimens by the time it was passed to the City of Liverpool in 1851. See Clemency Fisher, "The Knowsley Aviary & Menagerie," in Fisher, *A Passion for Natural History,* 84–95.

26. Letter to Charles Empson, 1 October 1831, published in Noakes, *Edward Lear: Selected Letters,* 14.

27. The few surviving examples of the paper covers which wrapped the original parts of the series declared that it was "To be completed in 14 Numbers." In fact, Lear suspended publication after issuing only twelve.

28. Letter to Sir William Jardine, 23 January 1834, Royal Scottish Museum (now part of National Museums of Scotland), Edinburgh, published in Noakes, *Edward Lear: Selected Letters,* 19.

29. Lear describes this transaction in a letter to George Coombe dated 19 April 1833, Frederick Warne Archives. For more information on John Gould, see Gordon C. Sauer, *John Gould the Bird Man: A Chronology and Bibliography* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1982).

30. Unpublished letter to George Coombe, 19 April 1833, Frederick Warne Archives. For a complete listing of works illustrated by Lear, see Vivien Noakes, *Edward Lear 1812–1888* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1985). An Octavo Edition of Bell and Sowerby's *A Monograph of the Testudinata* has been published with commentary by Kraig Adler (ISBN 1-891788-22-1).

31. Lear was then making illustrations of mammals for Lord Derby and for the *Transactions of the Zoological Society of London.*

32. Letter to Sir William Jardine, 23 January 1834; see Noakes, *Edward Lear Selected Letters,* 19–20.

33. *The Naturalist's Library, Ornithology,* volume vi, *Parrots,* text by Prideaux John Selby (Edinburgh: W. H. Lizars, London: S. Highly, Dublin: W. Curry, Jr., 1836).

34. Letter from William Lizars to William Jardine, 6 November 1834, National Museums of Scotland Library, quoted in Jackson and Davis, *Sir William Jardine: A Life in Natural History,* 74. Lizars also made plates for P.J. Selby, William Swainson, Patrick Syme, and James Wilson. Although at first pleased by the quality of Lizars' work, Audubon eventually moved his engraving commissions for *The Birds of America* from Lizars to Robert Havell, Jr., in London because of his frustration over delays in production.

35. For a discussion of the Linnean Society's accession records, see Brian Reade, *Edward Lear's Parrots* (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 1949), reprinted as *An Essay on Edward Lear's Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidae or Parrots* (London: Pion Ltd., 1978). At the time Lear began his series, he had no way of knowing which members of the parrot family he would be able to paint, so he wisely held off numbering the plates until the entire project was complete. See the Collation statement of this Octavo Edition for a listing of the dates and contents of the original parts.

36. Many of the preliminary studies for Lear's parrot plates are in the collection of the Houghton Library, Harvard University. Others are at the Blacker-Wood Library of Biology, McGill University.

37. See Lear Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Album PF MS Typ 55.9(6).

38. Letter to Charles Empson, 1 October 1831, published in Noakes, *Edward Lear: Selected Letters,* 14.

39. J.J. Audubon, "Account of the Method of Drawing Birds employed by J.J. Audubon, Esq. F.R.S.E. In a Letter to a Friend," *Edinburgh Journal of Science* 8 (1828): 48–54; reprinted in *Audubon Writings and Drawings,* ed. Christopher Irmscher (New York: The Library of America, 1999), 754. For a more detailed description of the techniques Audubon (1785–1851) used for mounting his specimens in lifelike poses, see "My Style of Drawing Birds" in ibid., 753–58.

40. Ibid., 756.

41. Letter to Charles Empson, 1 October 1831, published in Noakes, *Edward Lear: Selected Letters,* 14.

42. Letter from Edward Lear to Chichester Fortescue, 14 September 1863, published in Noakes, *Edward Lear: Selected Letters,* 185.

43. Letter from Edward Lear to John Gould, 1836 (31.x.36, ms), Houghton Library, Harvard University, printed in Noakes, *Edward Lear: Selected Letters,* 23.

44. Lear was particularly close to the landscape artist Daniel Fowler (1810–94), to whom he referred as "my old friend" and whose paintings from the Middle East he described as "without exception the finest sketches I ever saw from any artist's portfolio; some are beyond wonderful" (unpublished letter fragment, 1835?, Frederick Warne Archives). Through Hullmandel, Lear also knew the travel artist David Roberts (1796–1864).

45. Unpublished letter to Mrs. George Coombe, 3 March 1837, Frederick Warne Archive.

46. Letter to Emily Tennyson, 14 January 1861, quoted in Noakes, *Edward Lear: Selected Letters,* 166.

47. Letter from John Edward Gray to Lord Derby, 14 February 1844, National Museums and Galleries on Merseyside (NMGM) Archives Department, ref MM/8/K/3 173-5 [i.e., Letterbook 3, pp. 173–5]. Gray (1800–75) was keeper of the zoological collections at the Natural History section of the British Museum (1840–74) and among the most influential professional naturalists of his day. For more about Gray, see A.E. Gunther, *The*

Founders of Science at the British Museum 1753–1900 (Suffolk: The Halesworth Press, 1980). It is regrettable that the work of Joseph Wolf (1820–99), a third artist hired by Lord Derby in addition to Lear and B.W. Hawkins (1807–74), was not published as well. He worked at Knowsley Hall in 1850 and 1851, after Lord Derby had suffered a debilitating stroke and just before his death. Two bound volumes of his original paintings remain (unpublished) at Knowsley Hall.

48. It should be noted that one of the plates in *Gleanings...*, the Maned or Orinoco Goose (plate 15), was lithographed by D. Mitchell. The rest are all credited to Moore. It was common for lithographers to be identified in plate books of this period, but highly unusual for colorists to be acknowledged by name. It is a testament to the high esteem in which Bayfield was held that his contribution to the book was noted in the preface. For more information on Gabriel Bayfield, see Christine Jackson and Maureen Lambourne, "Bayfield: John Gould's unknown colourer," *Archives of Natural History* 17 (1990): 189–200.

49. John Edward Gray, Preface, *Gleanings...*. Subsequent research by the author on the original paintings at Knowsley Hall and on the specimens from which they were painted (now in the Liverpool Museum) reveals that this was not always the case. At least three of the illustrations were based on specimens that were no longer living at the time they were painted by Lear.

50. *The Pall Mall Gazette,* 15 February 1886; see also Noakes, *Edward Lear 1812–1888,* 188.

51. Noakes, *Edward Lear 1812–1888,* 10.

52. Edward Lear, *The Complete Verse and Other Nonsense,* ed. Vivien Noakes (London: Penguin Classics, 2001), 233–7.

Robert McCracken Peck is a naturalist, historian, and writer with a special interest in the intersection of science and art. As Fellow of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia since 1976, he has participated in and chronicled scientific research expeditions on five continents, written six books on the history of natural history—including *A Celebration of Birds: The Life and Art of Louis Agassiz Fuertes* (1982) and *Land of the Eagle: A Natural History of North America* (1990)—and guest-curated art and science exhibitions for museums and libraries throughout the United States and Great Britain. He has received research fellowships at the Houghton Library, Harvard University and at the Yale Center for British Art to study the natural history paintings of Edward Lear.

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Self-caricature by Lear.

Binding and Contents

BINDING

The Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia copy of Edward Lear's *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidae, or Parrots* is bound in half dark red morocco and marbled boards, a fine gilt-tooled decorative border to the morocco, spine with gilt-decorated raised bands and gilt title: LEAR'S // PARROTS; bookplate on front paste-down of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, with manuscript inscription "Deposited by Dr. T. B. Wilson [18]47."

MEASUREMENTS 21¼ × 14½ inches (540 × 365 mm).

Originally published in twelve parts in wrappers with pictorial lithographs on the front: Part I, dated Nov. 1st, 1830; Part II, dated Nov. 1st, 1830 [possibly issued in December]; Part III, dated Jan. 1st, 1831; Part IV, dated Feb. 1st, 1831; Part V, dated May 1st, 1831; Part VI, dated Aug. 1st, 1831; Part VII, dated Sept. 1st, 1831; Part VIII, dated Oct. 1st, 1831; Parts IX–XII, undated (title page with 1832 imprint issued in Part XII).

The position of the plates in the Philadelphia copy, which is the standard order for the bound edition, is correlated with the original order of the plates as issued in parts in the contents statement that follows.

CONTENTS

Leaf 1^{a} title; 1^{b} blank; 2^{a} Names of Subscribers; 2^{b} blank; 3^{a} To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty...; 3^{b} blank; 4^{a} List of Plates; 4^{b} blank; 42 unnumbered plates of lithographs, hand-colored: Plate 1 [Part II, plate 1], *Psittacus badiceps,* Bay-headed Parrot; plate 2 [Part IV, plate 3], *Plyctolophus rosaceus,* Salmon-crested Cockatoo; plate 3 [Part IX, plate 3], *Plyctolophus galeritus,* Greater Sulphur-crested Cockatoo; plate 4 [Part II, plate 3], *Plyctolophus sulphureus,* Lesser Sulphur-crested Cockatoo; plate 5 [Part VI, plate 3], *Plyctolophus Leadbeateri,* Leadbeater's Cockatoo; plate 6 [Part XII, plate 2], *Calyptorhynchus Baudinii,* Baudin's Cockatoo; plate 7 [Part IX, plate 1], *Macrocercus Aracanga,* Red and Yellow Maccaw; plate 8 [Part XI, plate 1], *Macrocercus Ararauna,* Blue and Yellow Maccaw; plate 9 [Part III, plate 2], *Macrocercus hyacinthinus,* Hyacinthine Maccaw; plate 10 [Part IV, plate 2], *Psittacara Patagonica,* Patagonian Parrakeet Maccaw; plate 11 [Part VII, plate 3], *Psittacara leptorhyncha,*

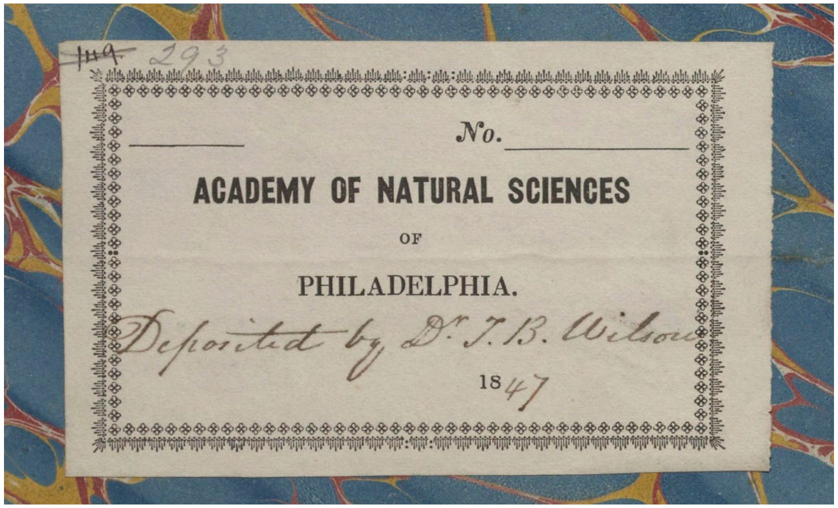
Long-billed Parrakeet Maccaw; plate 12 [Part V, plate 3], *Psittacara nana,* Dwarf Parrakeet Maccaw; plate 13 [Part VI, plate 2], *Nanodes undulatus,* Undulated Parrakeet; plate 14 [Part V, plate 2], *Platycercus erythropterus,* Crimson-winged Parrakeet (adult male); plate 15 [Part X, plate 4], *Platycercus erythropterus,* Crimson-winged Parrakeet (female and young male); plate 16 [Part X, plate 2], *Platycercus Tabuensis,* Tabuan Parrakeet; plate 17 [Part VI, plate 1], *Platycercus Baueri,* Bauer's Parrakeet; plate 18 [Part V, plate 1], *Platycercus Barnardi,* Barnard's Parrakeet; plate 19 [Part XII, plate 1], *Platycercus palliceps,* Pale-headed Parrakeet; plate 20 [Part IV, plate 1], *Platycercus Brownii,* Brown's Parrakeet; plate 21 [Part II, plate 4], *Platycercus pileatus,* Red-capped Parrakeet (adult male); plate 22 [Part XII, plate 4], *Platycercus pileatus,* Red-capped Parrakeet (female); plate 23 [Part I, plate 1], *Platycercus Stanleyii,* Stanley Parrakeet (adult male); plate 24 [Part XI, plate 2], *Platycercus Stanleyii,* Stanley Parrakeet (young male); plate 25 [Part IV, plate 4], *Platycercus unicolor,* Uniform Parrakeet; plate 26 [Part III, plate 1], *Platycercus Pacificus,* Pacific Parrakeet; plate 27 [Part VIII, plate 1] *Palaeornis Novae-Hollandiae,* New Holland Parrakeet (male and female); plate 28 [Part XII, plate 3], *Palaeornis melanura,* Black-tailed Parrakeet; plate 29 [Part VIII, plate 2], *Palaeornis anthopeplus,* Blossom-feathered Parrakeet; plate 30 [Part III, plate 3], *Palaeornis rosaceus,* Roseate Parrakeet; plate 31 [Part I, plate 3], *Palaeornis Columboïdes,* Pigeon Parrakeet; plate 32 [Part XI, plate 3], *Palaeornis cucullatus,* Hooded Parrakeet; plate 33 [Part I, plate 2], *Palaeornis torquatus,* Rose-ringed Parrakeet (yellow variety); plate 34 [Part VIII, plate 3], *Trichoglossus rubritorquis,* Scarlet-collared Parrakeet; plate 35 [Part X, plate 1], *Trichoglossus Matoni,* Maton's Parrakeet; plate 36 [Part VII, plate 2], *Trichoglossus versicolor,* Variegated Parrakeet; plate 37 [Part VII, plate 1], *Lorius Domicella,* Black-capped Lory; plate 38 [Part VI, plate 4], *Psittacula Kuhlii,* Kuhl's Parrakeet (male and female); plate 39 [Part X, plate 3], *Psittacula Taranta,* Abyssinian Parrakeet; plate 40 [Part IX, plate 2], *Psittacula torquata,* Collared Parrakeet; plate 41 [Part IX, plate 4], *Psittacula rubrifrons,* Red-fronted Parrakeet; plate 42 [Part II, plate 2], *Psittacula Swinderniana,* Swindern's Parrakeet.

REFERENCE (for original publication in parts) Matthews, G.M. "Dates of Issue of Lear's Illustr. Psittacidae…," *Austral Avian Record* 1 (1912): 23–24.

Provenance

As a label on the front pastedown indicates, this copy of Lear's folio was "Deposited by Dr. T. B. Wilson" in the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia in 1847. In the early nineteenth century it was Philadelphia rather than Boston or New York that was the center for the study of the natural history of North America. The Academy was the first institution of its kind in the United States. It was founded in 1812, acquiring a building of its own as early as 1815 and a journal by 1817—the first was essential for attracting and housing collections of specimens, the second for exchanges with other societies to build up a library.

Thomas Bellerby Wilson (1807–65) was exactly the sort of benefactor a young society required. He came from a prosperous Quaker family with interests in civic improvement. Like many naturalists of the period, Wilson was educated as a physician, but he never needed to practice. Instead he formed huge collections of minerals, birds, shells, fossils, reptiles, fish, and insects, either by purchasing existing cabinets or assembling them himself. He made five trips to Europe to buy books and collections of specimens, and numerous and extensive excursions on horseback alone, covering most of the United States north of the Mason-Dixon line and east of the Mississippi River. He joined the Academy in 1832 and remained a member until his death, over that period donating tens of thousands of specimens to its museum and some 12,000 volumes to its library—nearly half of its book stock at that time. Some of these books and specimens had been bought from the ornithological entrepreneur John Gould. Since



Accession label from the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia copy of Lear's *Psittacidae.*

Wilson was not a subscriber to Lear's *Psittacidae,* his copy may well have come from Gould's remainder stock of the book.

As specialist societies came into being in the second half of the century, Wilson was one of the fifteen founders of the Entomological Society of Philadelphia in 1859 and its leading benefactor in the early years, with gifts of cash, books, and insect specimens. (Since 1867, it has been known as the American Entomological Society.) Wilson, a bachelor, also had his own private museum and library, which filled an entire specially constructed wing in his brother's country house near Newark, New Jersey. Here was the vast reserve from which a new society might easily be outfitted. By the end of his life, constant calls on his books and specimens had left Wilson's suite of rooms dominated by the non-scientific residue, an extensive "gentleman's library."

This intermingling of public and private collecting, of individuals actively complementing institutions during their lifetime rather than exclusively by bequest, has long had a special appeal

to Americans. It has become almost a convention in academic libraries: at Harvard there is Philip Hofer's Department of Printing and Graphic Arts, at Yale W.S. Lewis' Walpole Library, and at Cornell, Willard Fiske's great Dante, Petrarch, and Icelandic collections. Wilson was one of the earliest if least celebrated, with little fame outside of Philadelphia. In part this is because he often simply paid invoices:

> It was perfectly understood both in the Entomological Society and the Academy of Natural Sciences that no member should be retarded in his investigations for want of books. He had simply to make known to Dr. Wilson his desires and the books were ordered, however expensive.*

Wilson also published little and lacked—for better or for worse—the sharp impress of the collector's personality. But, as his associates at the Entomological Society of Philadelphia wrote in their *Memoir of Thomas Bellerby Wilson* (p. 27): "He was the first man of wealth in America who understood the importance of having a large scientific library coupled with a large collection of objects of Natural History…." This was a pattern followed by Louis Agassiz at the Museum of Comparative Zoology in Cambridge and at the American Museum of Natural History in New York, as those cities came to rival Philadelphia in the natural sciences.

Daguerreotype of Thomas Bellerby Wilson.

* Jacob Ennis et al., *A Memoir of Thomas Bellerby Wilson, M.D.* (Philadelphia: The Entomological Society, 1865), 25–26.

There it took the usual "committee of leading citizens." In Philadelphia, with some initial help from William Maclure, Wilson accomplished it almost alone.

THE EDITORS

293
LEAR'S
PARROTS

~~119~~ 293

No. ______

ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES

OF

PHILADELPHIA.

Deposited by Dr. T. B. Wilson

1847

QL696
P7 L38
F
Wolf Room.

ILLUSTRATIONS

OF

THE FAMILY OF PSITTACIDÆ,

OR

PARROTS:

THE GREATER PART OF THEM

SPECIES HITHERTO UNFIGURED,

CONTAINING

FORTY-TWO LITHOGRAPHIC PLATES,

DRAWN FROM LIFE, AND ON STONE.

By EDWARD LEAR, A.L.S.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY E. LEAR, 61 ALBANY STREET, REGENT'S PARK.

1832.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

QL696
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EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

TO THE

Queen's Most Excellent Majesty,

THIS WORK

IS, BY HER MOST GRACIOUS PERMISSION,

HUMBLY DEDICATED,

BY

HER MAJESTY'S

MOST DUTIFUL AND FAITHFUL SUBJECT,

E. LEAR.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

LIST OF PLATES.

1. Psittacus badiceps. *Bay-headed Parrot.*
2. Plyctolophus rosaceus. *Salmon-crested Cockatoo.*
3. ——— galeritus. *Greater Sulphur-crested Cockatoo.*
4. ——— sulphureus. *Lesser Sulphur-crested Cockatoo.*
5. ——— Leadbeateri. *Leadbeater's Cockatoo.*
6. Calyptorhynchus Baudinii. *Baudin's Cockatoo.*
7. Macrocercus Aracanga. *Red and Yellow Maccaw.*
8. ——— Ararauna. *Blue and Yellow Maccaw.*
9. ——— hyacinthinus. *Hyacinthine Maccaw.*
10. Psittacara Patachonica. *Patagonian Parrakeet Maccaw.*
11. ——— leptorhyncha. *Long-billed Parrakeet Maccaw.*
12. ——— nana. *Dwarf Parrakeet Maccaw.*
13. Nanodes undulatus. *Undulated Parrakeet.*
14. Platycercus erythropterus. *Crimson-winged Parrakeet (adult male).*
15. ——— erythropterus. *Crimson-winged Parrakeet (female and young male).*
16. ——— Tabuensis. *Tabuan Parrakeet.*
17. ——— Baueri. *Bauer's Parrakeet.*
18. ——— Barnardi. *Barnard's Parrakeet.*
19. ——— palliceps. *Pale-headed Parrakeet.*
20. ——— Brownii. *Brown's Parrakeet.*
21. ——— pileatus. *Red-capped Parrakeet (adult male).*
22. ——— pileatus. *Red-capped Parrakeet (female).*
23. ——— Stanleyii. *Stanley Parrakeet (adult male).*
24. ——— Stanleyii. *Stanley Parrakeet (young male).*
25. ——— unicolor. *Uniform Parrakeet.*
26. ——— Pacificus. *Pacific Parrakeet.*
27. Palæornis Novæ Hollandiæ. *New Holland Parrakeet (male and female).*
28. ——— melanura. *Black-tailed Parrakeet.*
29. ——— anthopeplus. *Blossom-feathered Parrakeet.*
30. ——— rosaceus. *Roseate Parrakeet.*
31. ——— Columboïdes. *Pigeon Parrakeet.*
32. ——— cucullatus. *Hooded Parrakeet.*
33. ——— torquatus. *Rose-ringed Parrakeet (yellow variety).*
34. Trichoglossus rubritorquis. *Scarlet-collared Parrakeet.*
35. ——— Matoni. *Maton's Parrakeet.*
36. ——— versicolor. *Variegated Parrakeet.*
37. Lorius Domicella. *Black-capped Lory.*
38. Psittacula Kuhlii. *Kuhl's Parrakeet.*
39. ——— Tarantæ. *Abyssinian Parrakeet.*
40. ——— torquata. *Collared Parrakeet.*
41. ——— rubrifrons. *Red-fronted Parrakeet.*
42. ——— Swinderniana. *Swindern's Parrakeet.*

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PSITTACUS BADICEPS.

Bay-headed Parrot.

E. Lear del et lith. Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PLYCTOLOPHUS ROSACEUS.

Salmon-crested Cockatoo. 4/5 *Nat: Size*

E. Lear del. et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PLYCTOLOPHUS GALERITUS.

Greater Sulphur-crested Cockatoo.

E. Lear del. et lithog.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PLYCTOLOPHUS SULPHUREUS.

E. Lear, del et lith. Lefser Sulphur-crested Cockatoo. Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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PLYCTOLOPHUS LEADBEATERI.

Leadbeater's Cockatoo.

E. Lear del et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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CALYPTORHYNCHUS BAUDINII.

Baudin's Cockatoo.

2/3 Nat. Size.

In the possession of M^r. Leadbeater.

E. Lear del et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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P.P.A.N.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

MACROCERCUS ARACANGA.

Red and Yellow Maccaw.

2/3 Nat. Size.

E. Lear del. et lithog.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

MACROCERCUS ARARAUNA.

Blue & Yellow Maccaw.

½ Nat. Size.

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MACROCERCUS ARARAUNA.

Blue & Yellow Maccaw.

⅔ Nat. Size.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

MACROCERCUS HYACINTHINUS.

Hyacinthine Maccaw.

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MACROCERCUS HYACINTHINUS.

Hyacinthine Maccaw.

E. Lear del et lith. 3/4 Nat. Size. Printed by C. Hullmandel.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PSITTACARA PATAGONICA.

Patagonian Parrakeet Maccaw

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PSITTACARA PATAGONICA.

Patagonian Parrakeet-Maccaw.

E. Lear del et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PSITTACARA LEPTORHYNCHA.

Long-billed Parrakeet Maccaw

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PSITTACARA LEPTORHYNCHA.

Long-billed Parrakeet-Maccaw.

E. Lear del. et lithog.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PSITTACARA NANA.

Dwarf Parrakeet Maccaw

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PSITTACARA NANA.

Dwarf Parrakeet Maccaw.

E. Lear del. et lith. Printed by C. Hullmandel.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

NANODES UNDULATUS.

Undulated Parrakeet.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

NANODES UNDULATUS.

Undulated Parrakeet.

E. Lear del. et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PLATYCERCUS ERYTHROPTERUS.

Crimson-winged Parrakeet.

Male Adult.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PLATYCERCUS ERYTHROPTERUS.

Crimson-winged Parrakeet.

Male. Adult.

E. Lear del et lithog.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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PLATYCERCUS ERYTHROPTERUS.

Crimson winged Parrakeet.

1. Female 2. Young Male.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PLATYCERCUS ERYTHROPTERUS.

Crimson winged Parrakeet.

1. Female *2. Young Male.*

E. Lear del. et lith. *Printed by C. Hullmandel.*

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EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PLATYCERCUS TABUENSIS.

Tabuan Parrakeet.

E. Lear del et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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PLATYCERCUS BAUERI.

Bauer's Parrakeet.

E. Lear del. et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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PLATYCERCUS BARNARDI.

Barnard's Parrakeet.

E. Lear del et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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PLATYCERCUS PALLICEPS.

Paleheaded Parrakeet

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PLATYCERCUS PALLICEPS.

Paleheaded Parrakeet.

In the possession of M.r Leadbeater.

E. Lear del. et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PLATYCERCUS BROWNII.

Brown's Parrakeet.

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PLATYCERCUS BROWNII.

Brown's Parrakeet.

E. Lear del. et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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PLATYCERCUS PILEATUS.

Red-capped Parrakeet.

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PLATYCERCUS PILEATUS.

Red-capped Parrakeet.

E. Lear del: et lithog.   Printed by C. Hullmandel.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PLATYCERCUS PILEATUS.

Red capped Parrakeet.

In the Possession of the Right Hon. Lord Stanley.

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PLATYCERCUS PILEATUS.

Red-capped Parrakeet.

Female.

In the Poſseſsion of the Right Hon: Lord Stanley.

E. Lear del et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PLATYCERCUS STANLEYII.

Stanley Parrakeet.

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PLATYCERCUS STANLEYII.

Stanley Parrakeet.

E. Lear del et lith. Printed by C. Hullmandel.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PLATYCERCUS STANLEYII.

Stanley Parrakeet.

Young Male.

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PLATYCERCUS STANLEYII.

Stanley Parrakeet.

Young Male.

E. Lear del et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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PLATYCERCUS UNICOLOR.

Uniform Parrakeet.

E. Lear del et lith. Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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PLATYCERCUS PACIFICUS.

Pacific Parrakeet.

E. Lear del. et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PALÆORNIS NOVÆ-HOLLANDIÆ.

New Holland Parrakeet,

in the Posſeſsion of the Right Hon: the Counteſs of Mountcharles.

1. Male. 2. Female.

E. Lear del. et lithog.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PALÆORNIS MELANURA.

Black-tailed Parrakeet.

In the Collection of Mr. Leadbeater

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PALÆORNIS MELANURA.

Black-tailed Parrakeet.

In the Possession of Mr. Leadbeater

E. Lear del et lith. Printed by C. Hullmandel.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PALÆORNIS ANTHOPEPLUS.

Blofsom-feathered Parrakeet.

E. Lear del et lithog.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PALÆORNIS ROSACEUS

Roseate Parrakeet.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PALÆORNIS ROSACEUS.

Roseate Parrakeet.

E. Lear del. et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PALÆORNIS COLUMBOIDES.

Pigeon Parrakeet.

E. Lear del et lithog.   Printed by C. Hullmandel.

EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PALÆORNIS CUCULLATUS.

Hooded Parrakeet.

PALÆORNIS CUCULLATUS.

Hooded Parrakeet.

E. Lear del. et lith.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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EDWARD LEAR *Illustrations of the Family of Psittacidæ, or Parrots* LONDON, 1832 THE ACADEMY OF NATURAL SCIENCES OF PHILADELPHIA Octavo

PALÆORNIS TORQUATUS.

Rose Ringed Parrakeet._Yellow Variety.

E. Lear del. et lithog. Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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TRICHOGLOSSUS RUBRITORQUIS.

Scarlet-collared Parrakeet.

E. Lear del. et lithog. Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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TRICHOGLOSSUS MATONI.

Maton's Parrakeet.

E. Lear del. et lith.

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TRICHOGLOSSUS VERSICOLOR.

Variegated Parrakeet.

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TRICHOGLOSSUS VERSICOLOR.

Variegated Parrakeet.

E. Lear del. et lith.

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LORIUS DOMICELLA.

Black-capped Lory.

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PSITTACULA KUHLII.

Kuhl's Parrakeet.

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Abyſsinian Parrakeet.

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PSITTACULA TORQUATA.

Collared Parrakeet.

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PSITTACULA RUBRIFRONS.

Red-fronted Parrakeet.

E. Lear del. et lithog.

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PSITTACULA SWINDERNIANA.

Swindern's Parrakeet.

E. Lear del. et lithog.

Printed by C. Hullmandel.

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